

Awareness and utilization of library services: A study on students' perception and practices

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Abstract: A library is a well-organized collection of information and resources, designed to serve a specific community by providing access for reading and research. The library is the hub of all academic activities and serves as a foundation for intellectual excellence. Effective utilization of library information resources contributes significantly to improving the literacy rate in India. Furthermore, the integration of technology has transformed the functioning of libraries, particularly through the development of e-information services. Library resources are highly useful for teaching, learning, research, updating knowledge, developing skills, and fostering personal growth. These resources consist of materials and information acquired by libraries to fulfill the informational needs of their users. The primary aim of this study is to examine students' awareness, perceptions and usage practices related to library resources. Data for the study was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through a google form questionnaire completed by 223 respondents selected using the convenience sampling method. The sample respondents in this study consist of intermediate and graduate students.

Keywords: Students, Library services, Awareness and Perception.

1. INTRODUCTION

Library resources play a vital role in educational institutions. The effectiveness of any library relies on both the availability and proper use of its information resources. These resources play a vital role in supporting the teaching and learning processes within academic institutions. Library information resources provide vital support to both teachers and students in enhancing knowledge and facilitating effective learning. The existence and success of any academic institution largely depend on its library and the resources it offers. The library is considered a pillar that supports higher education and students cannot afford to ignore its importance. For teachers, library resources are indispensable for updating knowledge and improving teaching quality, while for students, they are crucial for learning and research. With access to library resources, research work becomes easier and more effective. The library is the hub of all academic activities and serves as a foundation for intellectual excellence. Effective utilization of library information resources contributes significantly to improving the literacy rate in India. Furthermore, the integration of technology has transformed the functioning of libraries, particularly through the development of e-information resources.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nesba Yaa Anima Adzobu Armah & Mac-Anthony Cobblah (2021) in their study analyzed the challenges faced by undergraduate students in accessing electronic information resources at the Sam Jonah Library. The study found that the primary challenges encountered by undergraduate students in accessing electronic information are predominantly institutional. The author suggested that university libraries should take systematic steps to ensure that the availability of electronic information resources effectively translates into actual access to these essential resources in the 21st century. The study concluded that strategies for improving access to electronic information resource collections need to be developed at the institutional level.

Booyesen Sabehe Tubulingane (2021) in this study "University Library Services and Student Academic Performance" explored the link between students' satisfaction with library services and their academic performance. It recommended that teaching staff supply up-to-date academic materials, and that library staff ensure these resources are readily accessible to students. The study concluded that access to relevant and sufficient library resources is essential for improving students' academic outcomes.

Sushma, H R & Ramesha (2022) this study examined the familiarity and use of web-based library information

services among the faculty members and research scholars of Bangalore University. The findings revealed that the most frequently used services included searching for specific documents online, accessing online databases and electronic journals, consulting electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs), viewing online lists of new arrivals, and using journal article indexes. The authors recommended enhancing awareness and promoting greater use of these web-based library and information services. The study concluded that library web pages should be regularly updated, websites should be user-friendly, online circulation should be effective, wireless internet connectivity should have higher bandwidth, and mobile-based library information services should be implemented.

Rajasekaran S, Pandeewaran C, P. Selvakamal, & M. Ganesamoorthy (2023) in this study “Digital Library Services and its Utilization Among the Students: A Case Study” analyzed students’ utilization of digital library services and examined the effectiveness of these libraries. The authors found that most libraries lacked adequate space, computers, and trained professionals, which were the primary reasons for underutilization of library services. They suggested that libraries should be regularly updated and well-equipped with all types of services to meet students’ needs. The study concluded that libraries must redesign and improve digital content delivery services and ensure that appropriate digital resources are made available to users for their research and academic activities.

Vijaykumar N & Roopa G (2024) in this study “Awareness and Use of Library Resource and Services in Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Central Library, Bangalore University: A Study” analyzed the awareness levels and usage of various types of library resources and services. The author found that substantial traffic from users borrowing textbooks at libraries. The author suggested that libraries need to conduct more awareness and orientation programs to enhance awareness about library resources and services. The study concluded that libraries provide better service its community and fostering a more informed and engaged user base.

3.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the awareness of students towards utilization of library services.
- To understand the student perception and practices towards utilizing library resources.

4.METHODOLOGY

The main objectives of the study are to understand students’ awareness, perception, and practices towards utilizing library resources. Data for the study was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was obtained through a Google Form questionnaire administered to 223 respondents, selected using the convenient sampling method. Secondary data was collected from publications and websites. The sample respondents for

this study consist of intermediate and graduate students, chosen on the basis of convenient sampling.

5. SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE STUDENTS

The profile of the sample students taken from both rural and urban areas. The sample respondents profile i.e., location, gender, education, occupation and income are analyzed based on the primary data. The profile of the sample students shown in the Table-1.

Table 1. Socio-economic Profile of the Students

Sl. No	Profile of the beneficiaries		No. of respondents	In %
1	Area	Rural	128	57.4
		Urban	95	42.6
		Total	223	100
2	Gender of the respondent	Male	147	65.9
		Female	76	34.1
		Total	223	100
3	Age	10 to 20 years	136	61
		20 to 30 years	87	39
		Total	223	100

The overall analysis of the table indicates that the majority of respondents live in rural areas, while the remaining respondents reside in urban areas. The results further show that 65.9 per cent of the respondents are male and 34.1 per cent are female in the study area. The analysis also reveals that most of the respondents fall in the age group below 20 years. Students’ awareness towards library resources is presented in Table-2.

Table 2. Students Awareness towards library resources

Students Awareness towards library resources	No. of the Sample Respondents	In %
Textbooks & Reference Books	163	73.1
Journals & Magazines	09	04
Newspapers	23	10.3
E-Books / E-Journals	03	1.3
Online Databases (e.g., INFLIBNET, JSTOR, etc.)	06	2.7
Previous Question Papers	16	7.2
Digital Repository / Institutional Repository	03	1.3
Total	223	100

It is observed from the above table that a majority (73.1 per cent) of the sample students are aware of the textbooks and reference books available in the library. Some students are aware of the availability of newspapers, while only a few students are aware of e-books, e-journals, online databases, magazines, and previous question papers. Table-3 presents information on how students became aware of library resources.

Table 3. How did you become aware of library resources

How did you become aware of library resources	No. of the Sample Respondents	In %
Library orientation/induction program	86	38.6
Friends/Peers	68	30.5
Notices/Announcements	16	7.2
Teaching Staff	53	23.8
Total	223	100

It is observed from the analysis of the above table that 38.6 per cent of the students became aware of library resources through the induction program. Some students learned about them through friends and peers, while only a few became aware through notice boards and teaching staff. Table-4 presents data on the frequency of students' library visits.

Table 4. How often do you visit the library

How often do you visit the library	No. of the Sample Respondents	In %
Daily	23	10.3
Weekly	100	44.8
Monthly	48	21.5
Rarely	52	23.3
Total	223	100

The overall analysis of the above table shows that the majority of students (44.8 per cent) visit the library once a week, while some visit monthly or rarely. Only a few students visit the library daily or regularly. Table-5 presents details of the duration students usually spend in the library during each visit.

Table 5. How long do students usually spend in the library during each visit

How long do students usually spend in the library during each visit	No. of the Sample Respondents	In %
Less than 1 hour	63	28.3
1-2 hours	142	63.7
2-3 hours	13	5.8
More than 3 hours	05	2.2
Total	223	100

The above table presents the details of the students usually spend in the library during each visit. It is observed from the analysis of the above table that 63.7 per cent of the students spend one to two hours in the library, while some students spend less than one hour. Only a few students spend more than two hours in the library. Table-6 presents the primary purposes for which students visit the library.

Table 6. What is student primary purpose of visiting the library

Primary purpose of visiting the library	No. of the Sample Respondents	In %
Borrowing books	48	21.5

Reading/Studying	124	55.6
Research/reference work	35	15.7
Internet/Computer access	10	4.5
Group discussions	06	2.7
Total	223	100

The above table presents the students primary purposes for visiting the library. It is observed from the above table that the majority of the sample students visit the library for reading, studying and borrowing books. Some sample students use the library for research work, while only a few visits for computer access or group discussions. Figure-1 illustrates students' perceptions of library services.

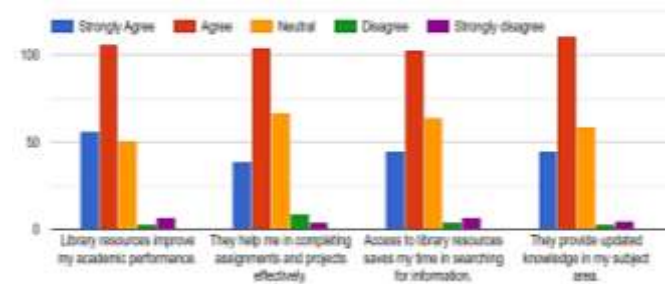


Figure 1. Student perception towards library services

The above figure presents students' perceptions of library services. Analysis of the data shows that the majority of students agreed that library resources help improve their academic performance, complete assignments, and carry out project work effectively. It is also observed that most students believe library resources save time in searching for information and provide updated knowledge in their respective subject areas. Figure-2 illustrates students' perceptions of library services.

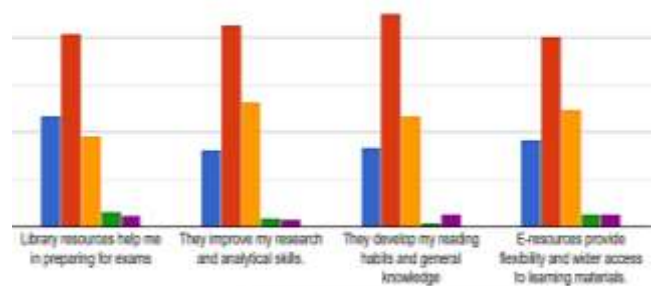


Figure 2. Student perception towards library services

The above chart illustrates students' perceptions of library services. It is observed from the figure that the majority of students agree that library resources assist in exam preparation and enhance their research and analytical skills. The figure also shows that most students believe library resources contribute to developing reading habits and broadening knowledge. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that the majority of students agree that e-resources provide flexibility and extensive access to learning materials.

6. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- It is observed from the above analysis that the majority of respondents fall in the age group below 20 years, and overall, 65.9 per cent are male and 34.1 per cent are female in the study area.
- Most of the sample students are aware of textbooks and reference books available in the library, while some are aware of newspapers. Only a few students are aware of e-books, e-journals, online databases, magazines, and previous question papers.
- Among the total sample, the majority of students became aware of library resources through the induction program, while some learned about them through friends and peers. Only a few students became aware through notice boards and teaching staff.
- The analysis of library visits frequency shows that most students visit the library once a week, some visit monthly or rarely, and only a few visits daily or regularly.
- Regarding the duration of library visits, 63.7 per cent of students spend one to two hours in the library, some spend less than one hour, and only a few spend more than two hours.
- Most students visit the library for reading, studying, and borrowing books. Some visit for research purposes, and only a few for computer access or group discussions.
- The majority of students agree that library resources help improve academic performance, complete assignments, and carry out project work effectively. Most students also agree that library resources save time in searching for information and provide updated knowledge in their subject areas.
- Furthermore, most students believe that library resources assist in exam preparation and enhance their research and analytical skills. A majority also agree that library resources help develop reading habits and expand knowledge.
- Majority of students agree that e-resources provide flexibility and wide access to learning materials.

7. SUGGESTIONS

- Educational institutions need to encourage students to utilize library resources effectively. By making proper use of these resources, students can enhance their competitive knowledge and achieve their academic goals.
- Libraries must be regularly updated and well-equipped with a wide range of services to meet the diverse needs of students.

8. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

In educational institutions, students must enhance their competitive knowledge by utilizing library resources effectively. Most students opined that library resources make it easier to prepare for all types of exams and improve their research and analytical skills. The study concludes that libraries need to provide high-configuration computer systems, high-speed internet facilities and a proper environment supported by competent staff, as these are key factors for the effective utilization of library services.

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